

Prestwick PowerPacks™

Practical Activities for Comprehension and Key Skills



Holes

by Louis Sachar

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Name: _____

Date: _____

Activity I: Anticipation Guide**Pre-Reading**

Answer the following questions that relate to the novel. Relax—there are no right or wrong answers. You will find it helpful when reading *Holes* to know where you stand on these issues.

1. What makes a true friend?
2. What freedoms do you have every day that you take for granted?
3. Describe a time in your life when you were accused of doing something that you had not done.
4. Do all people—even criminals—have some good in them? Explain.
5. If you could choose your own nickname, what name would you choose? Why?
6. Do you believe in fate? What about luck? Explain.
7. Describe an important part of your family history and tell how this makes your family special.
8. Is it more important to help yourself or to help others? Explain and give an example.
9. Does a person's level of education determine that person's worth in society? For example, are smart people more important than average people? Explain and give an example.
10. Is it okay to have a relationship with someone from another race or ethnicity? Why or why not?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Activity II: Connecting with Literature**Pre-Reading**

Have you ever been to the desert? If you and one friend were left alone in the desert for seven days, do you think you could survive? Have you ever heard of the real place called Death Valley? It's located in California and is actually a national park. Death Valley is a beautiful valley, but it is also one of the hottest, driest, and lowest valleys on the planet. More specifically, the temperature is usually over 100 degrees Fahrenheit, and it usually rains less than 2 inches per year there. In spite of these harsh conditions, flowers can still bloom in Death Valley. How is this possible?

Part 1

Imagine that you have been invited to camp in Death Valley. You can invite only one friend, and you can each bring only one backpack of supplies. What would you take in order to survive for the seven days? Fill each backpack on the **CAMPING PLAN** to get started.

Part 2

Pretend you must convince your parents to let you go on the camping trip. Your parents do not think you will want to go anywhere that does not have a remote control, a microwave, and a toilet, so they wonder if you are really serious about the trip. In addition, you know they will ask all kinds of questions about your safety. What do you know about camping or surviving in the desert? In order to prepare your argument, think of some of the questions they might ask and form your answers on the **CAMPING PLAN**.

Part 3

You are back from your camping trip. Did you make it the seven days, or did you have to be rescued? Did you encounter any dangerous desert creatures? Did you have to find additional food or water? Did you or your friend become ill? Did you get along well with your friend during the trip? With your partner, imagine what events happened during your camping trip and list three things that happened on the **SURVIVAL PAGE**. Then, write a one-page journal response detailing your trip. Knowing what you know now, for example, would you have packed differently? Was it a mistake to try the camping trip? Be sure to use complete sentences and proper paragraph structure.

Student's Page

Holes

Prestwick PowerPacks

Name: _____

Date: _____

CAMPING PLAN

Backpack #1 Contents:	Backpack #2 Contents:
Questions Your Parents May Ask:	Your Answers:
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Student's Page

Name: _____

Date: _____

SURVIVAL PAGE

Three things that happened on the trip:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Activity I: Context Clues**Chapters 1-6**

In order to understand what happens in *Holes*, you need to clearly understand the beginning of the novel. Chapters 1-6 contain many vocabulary words that can make the book hard to understand. You can understand the text, however, simply by using context clues. Context clues help you determine the meaning of new words and often appear in the same sentence or in nearby sentences. In the example below, you want to know the meaning of **hovers**. Look for context clues in this sentence from Chapter 1:

“During the summer the daytime temperature hovers around ninety-five degrees in the shade—if you can find any shade.” (Pg. 3)

Ninety-five degrees is a very hot day, especially if it is that hot in the shade. Imagine a summer day when it is ninety-five degrees in the shade. You are not in the shade, however, and it is hotter in the sunshine. It is reasonable to believe that it is this hot on a regular basis if it is that hot in the shade. It is possible that **hovers** means stays.

If you cannot determine a word's meaning from its context clues, you should look the term up in the dictionary.

Part 1

The following sentences contain vocabulary from chapters 1-6 of *Holes*. Look up each quote in the book, if necessary, to discover the missing word. Then, place each word in the crossword puzzle. If you need help, use the page numbers to find each quote in the book.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Across

Down

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. "There's a water _____ on the wall of the shower stall." (Pg. 20)</p> <p>6. "Theodore spit a thin line of saliva between his teeth, causing some of the other boys to complain about the need to keep their 'home' _____." (Pg. 19)</p> <p>7. "The judge called Stanley's crime _____." (Pg. 25)</p> <p>8. "He looked out the window at the _____ emptiness." (Pg. 8)</p> <p>10. "'Take a good look around you,' Mr. Sir said. 'What do you see?' 'Not much,' he said, then _____ added, 'Mr. Sir.'" (Pg. 14)</p> <p>12. "In spite of everything, when Stanley found out that Sweet Feet was going to be there, he was actually excited about the _____ of meeting his hero." (Pg. 22)</p> <p>15. "And you stole that from them, just so you could have a _____." (Pg. 25)</p> <p>17. "The bus wasn't air-conditioned, and the hot, heavy air was almost as _____ as the handcuffs." (Pg. 6)</p> <p>18. "To be a successful inventor you need three things: intelligence, _____, and just a little bit of luck." (Pg. 8)</p> <p>19. "Supposedly, he had a great-great-grandfather who had stolen a pig from a one-legged Gypsy, and she put a curse on him and all his _____." (Pg. 8)</p> <p>20. "A sign on front said, YOU ARE ENTERING CAMP GREEN LAKE _____ CORRECTIONAL FACILITY." (Pg. 12)</p> | <p>2. "Next to it was another sign which declared that it was a violation of the Texas Penal Code to bring guns, explosives, weapons, drugs, or alcohol onto the _____." (Pg. 12)</p> <p>3. "However, I prefer to use the names their parents gave them—the names that <i>society will recognize them by</i> when they return to become useful and hardworking members of _____." (Pg. 18)</p> <p>4. "_____ don't last long at Camp Green Lake." (Pg. 25)</p> <p>5. "Because of the _____ of water, each camper was only allowed a four-minute shower." (Pg. 21)</p> <p>9. "Clyde Livingston _____ that they were his sneakers and that he had donated them to help raise money for the homeless shelter." (Pg. 23)</p> <p>11. "It was too much of a _____ to be a mere accident." (Pg. 24)</p> <p>13. "In his mind he could hear his father's _____ voice softly singing to him." (Pg. 8)</p> <p>14. "At such times she _____ to mention the bad luck that befell the first Stanley Yelnats." (Pg. 9)</p> <p>16. "The land was barren and _____." (Pg. 11)</p> |
|---|---|

Student's Page

Name: _____

Date: _____

Part 2

Now, use the context clues from each quote to write a definition for each word. Then, using the dictionary, compare your definition to each word's true meaning. Correct your definitions if necessary.

1. stifling: _____

2. neglected: _____

3. desolate: _____

4. hastily: _____

5. sanitary: _____

6. scarcity: _____

7. coincidence: _____

8. despicable: _____

9. vacancies: _____

10. vast: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Activity II: Palindromes **Chapters 1-6**

Have you noticed that Stanley's last name, Yelnats, is a bit strange? Have you ever known anyone with the last name Yelnats? Probably not. What's so unusual about his last name? Read this quote from Chapter 3 to find out:

“Everyone in his family had always liked the fact that ‘Stanley Yelnats’ was spelled the same frontward and backward. So they kept naming their sons Stanley.”
(Pg. 9)

This type of word is called a palindrome. On the following line, write your own definition for palindrome.

Palindromes are: _____

Here are some other examples of palindromes:

- Level
- Kayak
- Deed
- Radar
- Redder
- Racecar

How many palindromes can you think of? Write them on the following lines. They can be words or names. Hint: Another one of the character's nicknames in *Holes* is a palindrome. You will find this answer in Chapter 5.

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ | 3. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 5. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 8. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 11. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 13. _____ | 14. _____ | 15. _____ |

Student's Page

Name: _____

Date: _____

Are you ready for more of a challenge? Try your hand at solving these palindrome puzzles. They are whole sentences or phrases that spell the same thing backwards or forwards. Here's an example:

I did, did I?

1. _____ spot
2. _____ failed.
3. We _____ in a pew.
4. _____ if I pull up.
5. No, sir. Panic is a basic in a _____.

Now, try to write your own palindromes. If you need help, start off with this one:

Was it a rat I saw?

Notice that the word rat can be replaced with other words and the sentence will still be a palindrome. Try it on the lines below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Why do you think the author, Louis Sachar, chose to make Stanley's name a palindrome?
